# Mythic Mastery Mythic Sphinxes

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## **Guardian Sphinx**

This glorious creature is a towering 15 feet tall and resembles a gorgeous, golden-furred lion with shining eagle's wings and the face of regal woman bearing a serpent-headed crown. She radiates the powers of the ancient pharaohs and opens her mouth to speak with a commanding voice.

#### **GUARDIAN SPHINX**

#### CR 13/MR 5

**XP 25,600** LG Huge magical beast

**Init** -1; **Senses** darkvison 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +27

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 7, flat-footed 30 (-1 Dex, +23 natural, -2 size) hp 199 (13d10+128) Fort +14, Ref +7, Will +9 DR 10/epic

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor)

**Melee** 2 claws +23 (2d6+18 plus grab/19-20) **Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** conceal object, guardian's riddle, mirage, mythic power (5/day, surge +1d8), pounce, rake (2 claws +23, 2d6+18), roar of the guardian, shape sands

**Spells Prepared** (CL 6th; concentration +11)

**3rd**—bestow curse (DC 18), searing light, speak with dead **2nd**—bull's strength, calm emotions (DC 17), cure moderate wounds, resist energy

**1st**—bless, comprehend languages, divine favor, remove fear, shield of faith

o—detect magic, guidance, purify food and drink, stabilize STATISTICS

Str 35, Dex 8, Con 22, Int 16, Wis 21, Cha 17 Base Atk +13; CMB +27; CMD 36 (40 vs. trip) Feats Alertness<sup>M</sup>, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Hover, Improved Critical<sup>M</sup> (claw), Power Attack<sup>M</sup> Skills Fly +3, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (any one) +16, Perception +27, Sense Motive +17, Survival +16 Languages Common, Draconic, Sphinx SQ powerful blows (claw) ECOLOGY Environment desert Organization solitary

Treasure double SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Conceal Object (Su):** A guardian sphinx has the power to conceal stationary creatures and objects as long as it remains nearby. A guardian sphinx can conceal a creature or object within 30 feet as a standard action, and can have a total number of creatures or objects concealed in this way at any one time equal to the remaining number of uses of mythic power it possesses. An object concealed this way is invisible, makes no sound, and cannot be detected by scent, blindsight, blindsense, or tremorsense. Even *see invisibility* and *invisibility purge* have no effect, although a *true seeing* spell from a mythic source does allow a concealed creature or object to be seen.

A guardian sphinx can conceal objects of any size or shape using this ability, though it must remain within 120 feet of the creature or object, or the effect ends. A guardian sphinx can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. The effect also ends if the creature or object moves. A building affected in this way can still be seen from the inside. A guardian sphinx can see objects concealed by this ability.

Guardian's Riddle (Su): By expending one use of mythic power, a guardian sphinx can issue a riddle to an intelligent creature within 60 feet. The creature must succeed on a Will save (DC 21, the saving throw DC is Wisdombased) or be forced to give an answer to the riddle. A creature who answers the riddle incorrectly is imprisoned in an extradimensional maze. This works as the spell maze, except that the affected creature cannot succeed at an attempt to escape for 24 hours and the DC to escape the maze is equal to 20 + the guardian sphinx's mythic rank (typically DC 25). A creature that succeeds in answering the riddle correctly cannot be affected by this ability or the guardian sphinx's mirage or roar of the guardian abilities for the next 24 hours. Additionally, during this time, a creature who successfully answered the riddle can see objects and creature concealed by the guardian sphinx's conceal objects ability. Finally, any creature who succeeds on the riddle automatically overcomes any damage reduction possessed by the guardian sphinx. For information about how to determine if a character answers the riddle correctly, see Sidebar: Riddles by the Numbers.

**Mirage (Sp):** A guardian sphinx is a master of creating realistic illusions. In order to use this ability, the guardian sphinx must be in a desert area. By expending one use of mythic power, the guardian sphinx can replicate any illusion spell of 5<sup>th</sup> level or lower as a spell-like ability. The guardian sphinx is treated as having a caster level of 9<sup>th</sup> for the purposes of this ability, and the saving throw DC, if any, is Wisdom-based.

**Powerful Blows (Ex):** A guardian sphinx adds 1.5 times its Strength modifier to damage rolls made with its claw attacks, instead of the normal amount.

**Roar of the Guardian (Su):** By expending a single use of mythic power, the guardian sphinx can roar with such force as to cause horrible fear and panic. This creates a 6o-foot cone of sonic energy which deals 4d8 points of sonic damage to all creatures in the cone. Additionally, creatures caught in the cone must succeed a Fortitude save (DC 22) or suffer 1d4 points of Strength damage, and must also succeed on a Will save (DC 21) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a mind-affecting sonic effect. The Fortitude saving throw DC is Constitution-based, and the Will saving throw DC is Wisdom-based.

**Shape Sands (Su):** By expending 1 use of mythic power, the guardian sphinx can shape sand into creatures to serve him. He can shape the sands into various forms, effectively transforming them into any creature which could be summoned using as *summon monster V* spell. Creatures created this way serve the sphinx as though summoned by the spell *summon monster I*. These creatures last for 1 minute before returning to sand. In addition to having the normal statistics for the creature they resemble, creatures created by this ability have damage reduction 2/- and are immune to critical hits and precision-based damage. Creatures created this way are always neutral.

# Ecology

As the name implies, guardian sphinxes are typically granted their mythic status and power in exchange for service as a powerful and unwavering guardian. Most commonly, guardian sphinxes watch over the ancient tombs of powerful sorcerers and pharaohs, ensuring not only that the deceased be allowed to rest in the afterlife without worry for their mortal remains, but also that their secrets and treasures will never again be seen in the mortal world, where they are sure to cause trouble. Guardian sphinxes take this role very seriously and never waiver in their duties, which can lead to conflicts with even the most noble-intentioned of heroes.

In addition to being of much greater size than a typical sphinx, a guardian sphinx radiates the power and authority of beings far beyond mortal ken. Whether this is an aspect of the sphinxes themselves, or a manifestation of the ghosts of the pharaohs and ancient forces which bestow their power on these exceptional sphinxes, is a matter of some debate. To those who have fortune to meet a guardian sphinx, it can be obvious why this might be the case, as the grace and intellect of these creatures is truly inspiring. Their tremendous power is tempered by the wisdom of long ages and a perfect devotion to their duties. Normally friendly and helpful creatures, a guardian sphinx never attacks without provocation or command from forces greater than itself, and it prefers to handle interlopers by calmly explaining to them that it is in their best interests to walk away. Guardian sphinxes enjoy games and riddles to an extent even greater than their brethren, and though they can weave powerful and deadly magics into their riddles, they often find that doing so makes it difficult to match wits with other clever beings over long periods of time and thus restrict their magical riddles to battles and other dire situations.

Guardian sphinxes have a number of incredibly potent abilities which allow them to defend their charges with expertise. The first defense most often employed is to render their charge imperceptible to the outside world. They can hide even large tombs and pyramids from all those who cannot answer their riddles or slay the sphinx. Unfortunately, doing so prevents the sphinx from traveling far, which means that would-be robbers often know a guardian sphinx means there is great treasure not far off. In addition to this potent ability, however, the guardian sphinx can use its famed riddles to imprison tomb robbers in another dimension, summon beasts made of sand to crush its foes, and produce illusions of almost any kind.



# Nile Sphinx

The mighty structure before you is nearly as large as the great pyramid it stands guard over. It is made from ancient bricks and resembles a typical sphinx in every respect, truly a perfect carving worn with time. The sand trembles as it rises to its feet, and the very world shakes when it unleashes its dreadful roar.

#### NILE SPHINX

#### **CR 16/MR 6**

XP 76,800 N Colossal construct

Init -4; Senses darkvison 60 ft., low-light vision, true seeing; Perception +22 DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 2, flat-footed 31 (+29 natural, -8 size)

hp 206 (12d10+140)

Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +10

#### Defensive Abilities fortification; DR 10/epic; Immunities construct traits

OFFENSE Speed 60 ft.

Melee 2 claws +24 (4d6+30 plus grab/19-20)

Space 30 ft.; Reach 30 ft.

Special Attacks: halt time, mythic power (7/day, surge +1d8), pounce, rake (2 claws +28, 4d6+30), riddle of doom, speed up time, symbols

#### Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)

Constant—comprehend languages, detect magic, read magic, true seeing STATISTICS

Str 50, Dex 11, Con —, Int 10, Wis 19, Cha 19 Base Atk +12; CMB +40 (+44 grapple); CMD 50 (54 vs. trip) Feats Alertness<sup>M</sup>, Cleave<sup>M</sup>, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack<sup>M</sup> Skills Perception +22, Sense Motive +22 Languages Common, Draconic, Sphinx; comprehend languages SQ powerful blows (claw), recovery ECOLOGY **Environment** desert **Organization** solitary **Treasure** standard SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fortification (Ex): A Nile sphinx has an 50% chance to treat any critical hit or sneak attack as a normal hit, as if wearing moderate fortification armor.

Halt Time (Su): A Nile sphinx has the ability to temporarily stop time in a localized area. As a standard action, a Nile sphinx can halt time by expending one use of mythic power. During this time, the Nile sphinx and a number of creatures within 30 feet that it designates can take 1d3 rounds' worth of actions. The Nile sphinx can affect a number of creatures in this way, including itself, equal to its mythic rank, each time it uses this ability. Affected creatures act in initiative order, one rounds' worth of actions at a time. A Nile sphinx can only use this ability once per day.

**Powerful Blows** (Ex): A Nile sphinx adds 1.5 times its Strength modifier to damage rolls made with its claw attacks, instead of the normal amount.

**Recovery** (Su): A Nile sphinx can expend one use of mythic power to recover 50 hit points. A Nile sphinx can use this ability once per minute.

**Riddle of Doom (Su):** As a standard action, by expending one use of mythic power, a Nile sphinx can speak a dread riddle to a single creature within 30 feet. Unless the target succeeds on a Will save (DC 20) he must answer the beast's riddle. A creature who answers incorrectly is driven insane, as though by the spell insanity. A creature who successfully answers the riddle ignores the Nile sphinx's damage reduction for 1 minute, instead. The saving throw DC is Wisdom-based.

Speed up Time (Su): A Nile sphinx can speed up time for a single creature. As a standard action, the Nile sphinx can expend one use of mythic power in order to force a single living creature within 100 feet to succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 20) or age 2d100 years. Creatures that die in this way are not considered to have died of old age for the purposes of resurrection magic. The saving throw DC is Wisdom-based.

Symbols (Sp): A Nile sphinx is marked with magical symbols which it can activate to replicate the effects of a symbol of fear (DC 20), symbol of pain (DC 19), symbol of persuasion (DC 20), symbol of sleep (DC 19), or symbol of stunning (DC 21). A Nile sphinx can only have one symbol active at any given time. The symbols on a Nile sphinx affect all creatures who can clearly see the symbol and who are within 30 feet of the Nile sphinx. Activating a symbol is a swift action which the Nile sphinx can perform once each round.

### Ecology

Very rarely are these behemoths created, and their sole purpose is to serve as the guardians of the most sacred places of ancient kingdoms and elder gods. Built from the stone beneath the river of the underworld, these titans can withstand millennia without ever feeling the effects of time. Normally, these terrible beasts exist as silent monuments to the powers of the ancients, standing a silent vigil over their wards. It is only through the intervention of the oldest and most potent magics known only to the gods of the Nile that they can be brought to life.

When animated, these monsters have only one purpose: to destroy any who threaten the old kingdom. They unleash the full brunt of their exceptional strength and powerful minds to shatter their foes. Few mortals can stand to hear one of their riddles, lest they be damned by its magic. Those who can are often doomed all the same by the giant beast's extreme strength. For those who can stand toe-to-toe with the beast, they must contend with the Nile sphinx's limited mastery over time in order to have any hope of escaping. Fortunately, Nile sphinxes are not only rare, but only remain active for short times.

Though not a true sphinx, as it is not truly alive, a Nile sphinx does share the personality and mind of a typical gynosphinx and is subject to many of the same avarices and pitfalls. Despite its great size and power, a Nile sphinx is actually less intelligent than most sphinxes; though it has a great deal of wisdom and personal magnetism to make up

for this, it is a startlingly inferior riddle-maker and if one can encounter a Nile sphinx who is not fully committed to wanton slaughter, one can usually gain the upper hand through a simple game of riddles. As an additional curiosity, though the Nile sphinx is the most powerful of sphinx guardians, they are passive and rarely stop anyone from taking the treasure concealed within the nearby pyramids, leading to the question of just what they are guarding.

Cas Caso

#### Sidebar - Riddles By the Numbers

Riddles can be one of the most difficult things to adjudicate at the game table. We all want to use fun and flavorful riddles and puzzles in order to challenge the minds and bodies of the characters in the game. Unfortunately, some players are very good at riddles and mind games, while other are not so strongly suited to solving riddles. Often, the real-life skill sets of players don't match up with the skills their characters are supposed to have. This has the potential to ruin the suspension of disbelief; after all, an intellectual wizard or wise priest should be more skilled at answering brain twisters than a murderous barbarian with no mental power to speak of. Not to mention that sometimes, as GMs, we lack the brain power to invent riddles which might be used to befuddle our very clever friends. If that sounds like your group, don't worry: you can still utilize these excellent sphinxes with riddle-based abilities, and even employ riddles and mind games elsewhere in your game.

To that end, we offer a simple means to break down a riddle into a simple, by-the-numbers mechanical expression. The character telling the riddle makes his choice of an Intelligence or Wisdom check. This roll should never be public and should always be made by the GM. The answering character then makes an opposed check, either Intelligence or Wisdom (their choice). If the result of the answering character's check exceeds the result of the asking character's check, he can successfully answer the riddle. If not, then the riddle has stumped the character.

Is that too simple for you? Why not try one of the alternative suggestions below?

**Involving Skills:** By involving specific skills, you can make it feel like answering riddles draws upon a character's education and acquired knowledge, and not just on his innate talent. Any Knowledge skill might be used to frame a riddle in this way. The asking character and the answering character each make opposed Knowledge checks, with the character achieving the higher result gaining a +4 bonus on the opposed ability check. Sometimes other skills might be more realistic than a given Knowledge skill; for example, a riddle involving potions might use Craft (alchemy), while a riddle involving knowledge of anatomy might use Heal instead.

Another way to involve skills would be to try to frame the riddle (or the answer!) in a clever way in order to trick the other party. In order to do this, the party attempting to outwit the other makes a Bluff check, which is opposed by the other character's Sense Motive check, with the character achieving the higher result gaining a +4 bonus on the opposed ability check. Other skills could be applied in similar ways: Intimidate could be used to make the answerer off-balance and interrupt his ability to focus on the riddle, for example. Each party can choose to attempt up to 3 skill checks in this way during an exchange of riddles, but the bonuses gained in this way should not exceed +10.

**Sample Riddles:** Of course, breaking a riddle down into a series of rolls also hurts the suspension of disbelief, but it can be difficult to come up with riddles on the spot. Luckily, there are a large collection of riddles and mind twisters available from a wide variety of sources, which you can borrow for your game. A few common riddles are presented here.

Q: I can run but not walk. Wherever I go, thought follows close behind. What am I? A: A nose

Q: Give me food, and I will live; give me water, and I will die. What am I? A: Fire

Q: The man who invented it doesn't want it. The man who bought it doesn't need it. The man who needs it doesn't know it. What is it?

A: A coffin

Q: I can be cracked, I can be made. I can be told, I can be played. What am I? A: A joke

Q: Throw me off the highest building, and I'll not break. But put me in the ocean, and I will. What am I? A: A wave

Q: I run over fields and woods all day. Under the bed at night I sit not alone. My tongue hangs out, up and to the rear, waiting to be filled in the morning. What am I?

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A: A shoe

Q: A certain crime is punishable if attempted, but not punishable if committed. What is it?

A: Suicide

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# Paragons of Wisdom and Might!

The majestic sphinx is more than just a symbol of the ancient lands of the Nile. It is a symbol of power and wisdom, a guardian that stands throughout the ages. Sphinxes have a long history in fantasy roleplaying games, and several distinct breeds have shown up throughout the years, but Mythic Adventures provides only a single mythic sphinx to work with.

This book provides two more mythic sphinxes, each with several never-beforeseen powers an abilities. The guardian sphinx, who takes its role as a guardian of important people and objects very seriously, and is magically able to shroud creatures and objects from detection, even if they're buildings the size of mountains! It can also levy its powerful guardian's riddle to foil would=be tomb raiders, who must answer correctly or be trapped in an extraplanar hell. Its roar is so mighty that it panies even the greatest of warriors, and saps the strength from those who hear it. And if all that fails, the guardian sphinx still has several other tricks.

The Nile sphinx is somewhat different: a colossal sphinx=shaped construct made of immense blocks of sandstone. It, too, employs a magical riddle that dooms those who are unable to answer it, but it also has power over time, halting it for the sake of itself and allies, or speeding it up to age foes into oblivion, among other dangerous abilities.

Finally, there is a brief discussion on handling riddles at the table, which provides some helpful guidelines for ways in which to use ability and skill checks to adjudicate such circumstances, and also provides several sample riddles.

The Mythic Mastery series of products builds and expands on the rules for mythic characters introduced in Mythic Adventures. Each Mythic Mastery provides new content and rules for mythic games, with a focus on a single theme or area of play. While some of the content provided in Mythic Mastery products requires the use of mythic characters and a mythic adventure, others, such as those focused on exploring mythic monsters, can be used in games of every sort.

